



**IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES**

**August 24, 2007**

**For immediate release**

**NOTE TO EDITORS: A power outage at the Wallace Building all day Thursday prevented EcoNewsWire from being distributed on its normal day and time.**

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## **DNR ISSUES BOIL ORDER FOR OTTUMWA**

**MEDIA CONTACT: Kevin Baskins at (515) 281-8395**

OTTUMWA — A boil order has been issued for the city of Ottumwa after torrential rains Thursday evening and early Friday morning caused flooding at the water treatment plant.

The heavy precipitation caused a combination of flood water and backed up sewage water to flood into the basement of the facility ruining pumps. Motors on the pumps were undergoing emergency repairs Friday.

“Right now, the key issue is maintaining water pressure through the distribution system,” said Paul Brandt of the DNR’s field office in Washington.

It was estimated Friday morning that Ottumwa's water supply could be down 24 to 36 hours. The city of Ottumwa has approximately 25,000 residents.

If the water pressure falls too low before the pumps can go back online, the entire system will have to be flushed and sanitized prior to the boil order being lifted. As of Friday morning, the city had a supply of 500,000 gallons of treated water in storage that could be used to try and maintain pressure in the system.

By Friday morning, fresh water was being hauled to the hospital and care facilities and the Red Cross was on the scene to provide bottled water. Portable toilets were also being placed at various locations throughout the city.

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## **DNR ISSUES BOIL ORDER FOR BACON ADDITION IN JONES COUNTY**

**MEDIA CONTACT: Mike Wade at (563) 927-2640.**

MONTICELLO – The DNR has issued a boil order for Bacon Addition, a subdivision west of Monticello in Jones County.

The order was issued Friday morning after routine water testing showed bacteria levels above the maximum contaminant level in August. Testing in July showed somewhat elevated bacteria levels.

Boiling destroys bacteria present in the water. Water should be brought to a boil, boiled one minute and then allowed to cool before using. More information on disinfecting water is available on the EPA Safe Drinking Water Hotline at (800) 426-4791.

All residents are being notified by phone or by hand delivery. They will also be notified when test results show that the water is safe to drink and no longer has to be boiled.

The City of Monticello will shock chlorinate the distribution system Friday night and install a disinfection system this weekend.

*Writer: Karen Grimes*

# # #

## **DRINKING WATER WARNING ISSUED TO TIMBER RIDGE MOBILE HOME PARK SOUTH OF SHELLSBURG**

**MEDIA CONTACT: Mike Wade at (563) 927-2640.**

SHELLSBURG – The DNR told residents of the Timber Ridge Mobile Home Park in Benton County that infants under six months old should not be drinking the water and it should not be used to prepare infant formula or juices.

The water should not be boiled, since boiling leaves nitrite behind as the water evaporates.

The DNR issued the warning after test results received Aug. 24 showed elevated nitrite levels in the drinking water supply, almost double the maximum contaminant level of 1.0 mg./L. Nitrite in drinking water is a serious health concern for infants, but children older than six months and adults can drink the tap water, because they process the nitrite differently.

Pregnant women and people with health problems may want to contact their doctors.

The mobile home park has notified residents and is flushing the water lines and adding chlorine. Residents will also be notified when the warning has been lifted.

The nitrite is formed when bacteria in the water distribution system convert ammonia in the water supply to nitrite. It is more likely to occur during hot weather.

The nitrite is not related to recent rains or to agricultural activities.

*Writer: Karen Grimes*

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## **DNR LIFTS BOIL ORDER FOR POWESHIEK RURAL WATER CUSTOMERS IN BENTON COUNTY**

**MEDIA CONTACTS: Mike Wade at DNR at (563) 927-2640**

BENTON COUNTY – The DNR has lifted a boil order for all Benton County customers of the Poweshiek Rural Water Supply.

Laboratory test results came back clean for bacteria, allowing the DNR to lift the boil order that had been in effect since Tuesday. Water pressure has also been restored.

The order affected the cities of Van Horne and Norway, along with rural customers.

*Writer: Jessie Brown*

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## **LIVESTOCK PRODUCERS – STOP MANURE RUNOFF FROM REACHING WATER NEAR YOU**

**MEDIA CONTACT: Eric Wiklund at (641) 424-4073 for confinements; Tom McCarthy at (563) 927-2640 for open feedlots.**

DES MOINES — Livestock producers can prevent or reduce damage from manure discharges despite heavy rainfalls that may have stressed manure storage facilities.

Unlike municipalities that take in lots of rainfall and discharge very dilute wastewater, livestock facilities have a concentrated manure product that may result in fish kills or stress to aquatic organisms.

Although their approach may differ, both open feedlot and confinement producers can prevent water quality problems by stopping manure runoff from entering Iowa streams.

Confinement producers should call their local DNR field office for assistance and options if their manure storage structure is nearly full.

“When saturated soils and heavy rainfall prevent producers from land applying manure, DNR staff can provide options and OK alternative application,” said Eric Wiklund, an environmental specialist in Mason City. “Often that involves transferring the manure to another nearby storage facility or land applying at agronomic rates that will not cause the manure to infiltrate,” he said.

Producers should not pump the manure to the ground or a nearby field, he said. And, they should not let the structure overflow. Producers should call the DNR field office if manure levels are approaching one foot below the top of a concrete or steel structure, or within two feet of the top of an earthen berm.

Wiklund said that several confinement producers have caused large fish kills or pollution events in the past by pumping manure to a field. The manure discharged directly to a stream or infiltrated a tile line that discharged to a stream, resulting in water quality violations and penalties for the producer.

Open feedlots are the single largest source of fish kills in Iowa, causing 22 percent of human-caused fish kills from 1995 to 2006. Manure runoff is more likely with open feedlots than confinements, because confinement operations are not allowed to discharge or stockpile manure. Even small lots with fewer than 100 animals can cause a problem if not managed carefully, said Tom McCarthy, a DNR environmental specialist in Manchester.

He recommends feedlot owners walk below their feedlot after every rainfall or freeze-thaw cycle to ensure runoff is not entering Iowa streams, rivers or lakes.

“Open feedlot owners with runoff control structures should check those basins frequently while it’s raining,” said Ken Hessenius, supervisor of the Spencer DNR field office. “Those basins can fill up fast and can be breached if they overflow.”

Producers should call a field office if it looks like the basin will overflow.

McCarthy also encourages open feedlot producers to check the locations of their stockpiles. They should make sure that solids are kept off of steep slopes (more than three percent slope), out of grassed waterways or where water pools. Open feedlot stockpiles should also be kept at least 800 feet away from a high quality water resource; 400 feet away from other environmentally sensitive areas; and 200 feet away from a terrace tile inlet or surface tile inlet.

Field offices are listed on the DNR Web site at [www.iowadnr.gov/fo/index.html](http://www.iowadnr.gov/fo/index.html). Or, call one of the offices listed below:

- Northeast Iowa, Manchester, (563) 927-2640.
- North Central Iowa, Mason City, (641) 424-4073.
- Northwest Iowa, Spencer, (712) 262-4177.
- Southwest Iowa, Atlantic, (712) 243-1934.
- South Central Iowa, Des Moines, (515) 725-0268.
- Southeast Iowa, Washington, (319) 653-2135.

Producers often ask about the effects of municipal bypasses, but DNR fish kill records indicate that less than three percent of fish kills can be traced to wastewater bypasses. Untreated wastewater from municipalities is fairly dilute. Most municipal bypasses occur when rainfall is heavy and stream flows are high, keeping recreational users out of the stream and further diluting the wastewater.

*Writer: Karen Grimes*

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## **DNR REVOKES ARMSTRONG WATER OPERATOR'S CERTIFICATION**

**MEDIA CONTACT: Julie Sievers at (712) 260-0625.**

ARMSTRONG — The DNR has revoked the certification of the person formerly responsible for the drinking water and wastewater treatment systems in Armstrong.

In a legal consent order with the DNR, operator Adam Anderson admitted to falsifying data. He agreed to surrender his certification for water treatment and distribution, and to not reapply for water or wastewater certification in Iowa. He was not certified for wastewater.

The revocation comes after a citizen reported to the DNR that the city was not using chlorine to disinfect its drinking water system. A DNR investigation verified the claim and found that Anderson had falsely reported to the DNR that he was chlorinating the

system and doing other required testing. Anderson is no longer employed by the City of Armstrong, which is located in Emmet County.

“We revoked the operator’s certification because he was putting the drinking water and people of Armstrong at an extreme risk,” said Julie Sievers, a DNR environmental specialist based out of Storm Lake. “Operators around the state need to know that we take these types of events very seriously, and we do investigate water systems. The City of Armstrong has hired a certified operator and the city’s water is safe to drink.”

The DNR requires water supplies and wastewater treatment facilities to submit a monthly operating report, detailing how they have met or failed to meet treatment requirements.

“If you notice something has changed in your drinking water, call your city officials. If you don’t get a satisfactory answer from the city, we encourage Iowans to call their local DNR field office,” Sievers said.

The DNR has the ability to suspend and revoke certificates for water supply and wastewater operators.

*Writer: Jessie Brown*

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## **ADDITIONAL RAINFALL LEADS TO MORE WASTEWATER BYPASSES**

**NOTE TO EDITORS:** This is an update to the bypass news releases that were issued August 20, 21 and 22.

**MEDIA CONTACT: Kevin Baskins at (515) 281-8395.**

DES MOINES – With heavy rain continuing to fall across the state, the following cities have reported wastewater bypasses:

### **Black Hawk County**

Cedar Falls: The City of Cedar Falls is bypassing from its wastewater treatment plant and its Park Drive lift station. A detention pond at the plant has filled due to heavy rain, and the city is bypassing from the pond into a wooded area at a rate of 100 gallons per minute. The city is bypassing to another wooded area from the lift station at a rate of 1,000 gallons per hour. The basin bypass began Thursday at 11:45, while the lift station bypass began at 4:30 a.m. Friday. The city is cleaning up solids around the lift station.

Cedar Falls is also bypassing untreated wastewater from a manhole in the 1200 block of Lilac Street. The city is pumping the wastewater directly into the storm sewer, which flows into the Cedar River. This bypass began at 8:00 a.m. Friday and the city reports it will stop by 2:00 p.m. Friday.

**Bremer County**

Readlyn: The City of Readlyn is bypassing from its wastewater treatment plant to a road ditch along 240th Street and from a lift station at the intersection of County Road V49 and First Street. The bypasses are reaching the Wapsipinicon River after flowing through a few miles of the ditch. This is in addition to bypasses reported earlier in the week.

**Cherokee County**

Cherokee: The City of Cherokee bypassed 54,000 gallons of untreated wastewater from 7:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. Wednesday from a manhole at the intersection of Euclid and Willow. The bypass reached the Little Sioux River. The city bypassed an additional 63,000 gallons from the same location from 8:15 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. Thursday.

**Clarke County**

Murray: The City of Murray bypassed untreated wastewater from 9:00 p.m. Thursday to 5:30 a.m. Friday. Wastewater from the north lift station bypassed to an unnamed tributary of Squaw Creek, while a bypass from the south lift station reached an unnamed tributary of East Long Creek.

**Clinton County**

Clinton: The City of Clinton has reported a storm water permit bypass at its ML Kapp Generating Station. Heavy rains caused the coal pile at the station to wash out, covering storm sewer drains. Storm water runoff diverted to Mill Creek and the Mississippi River, beginning at 12:30 p.m. Thursday.

Clinton: The Equistar facility near Clinton bypassed an unknown amount of partially treated process water and storm water to a county road ditch Thursday. A lagoon at the facility holds process wastewater and storm water runoff from the plant site. Heavy rain caused the lagoon to overflow from 3:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Process water is wastewater generated from manufacturing and industrial processes.

**Des Moines County**

Burlington: The City of Burlington bypassed 6,100 gallons of untreated wastewater to the Mississippi River from 8:30 to 9:45 Wednesday evening. The city bypassed from its Brooks Street Flow Regulating Chamber to the Mississippi River and has notified downstream water users of the bypass. The city began bypassing partially treated wastewater at 3:00 a.m. Friday from its 14th Street lift station. That bypass is ongoing.

Middletown: The Iowa Army Ammunition Plant began bypassing partially treated wastewater to Brush Creek beginning at 7 a.m. Friday. The plant is discharging at a rate of 35 to 50 gallons per minute. The bypass is ongoing.

**Dubuque County**

Dubuque: The City of Dubuque bypassed 4,000 gallons of untreated wastewater from Key Way Dr. to Catfish Creek from 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. Wednesday.

**Grundy County**

Wellsburg: The City of Wellsburg stopped bypassing at 7 p.m. Thursday. This is an update to a previously reported bypass.

**Hardin County**

Ackley: The City of Ackley is discharging partially treated wastewater to South Beaver Creek from a lagoon.

Iowa Falls: The City of Iowa Falls has been bypassing to the Iowa River since Aug. 18. The amount bypassed is still unknown.

**Marion County**

Knoxville: The City of Knoxville bypassed one million gallons of wastewater from a basin at its treatment plant and another 350,000 gallons from three points in its sewage collection system. The bypass to Competine Creek began Thursday and ended Friday.

**Montgomery County**

Stanton: The City of Stanton began bypassing untreated wastewater from its main lift station to the Tarkio River at 9 p.m. Thursday. The bypass is ongoing.

**Muscatine County**

West Liberty: The City of West Liberty began bypassing untreated wastewater from its treatment plant wet well to Wapsinonoc Creek at 1 p.m. Thursday.

**Scott County**

Eldridge: The City of Eldridge bypassed 2,000 gallons of wastewater from its Price Street Lift Station to a field from 3:30 a.m. to 4:00 a.m. Thursday.

**Wapello County**

Eddyville: Chamness Technology will pump partially treated wastewater from a lagoon at its Eddyville compost facility Friday. Following heavy rains, the lagoon is about to overflow. Lowering the level of the lagoon will prevent damage to the structure. Chamness Technology plans to bypass until rain stops in the area. The bypass to farm fields is expected to eventually reach Palestine Creek and the Des Moines River.

Ottumwa: The City of Ottumwa began bypassing untreated wastewater from various sewers to the Des Moines River Thursday night. The city is pumping from these sewers to prevent river water from backing up into its sewer system, which has combined storm and sanitary sewers, and into basements.

**Washington County**

Riverside: The City of Riverside bypassed 15,000 gallons of untreated wastewater for five minutes Friday morning. Staff at the city's wastewater treatment plant was performing maintenance when problems led to an accidental bypass to a drainage ditch at 5:15 a.m. The ditch eventually discharges to the English River.



